





STATE OF THE UNION.

SPEECH

OF

HON. EMERSON ETHERIDGE,

OF TENNESSEE.

Delivered in the House of Representatives, Jan. 23, 1861.

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SPEECH.

The House having under consideration the report of the select committee of thirty-three—

Mr. ETHERIDGE said:

MR. SPEAKER, I have frequently had occasion to express my opinions in regard to matters of grave public concern, and I have often done so at the risk of imputations upon my political integrity. I have too frequently found that many of those with whom I differed, have indulged in censure of my acts, and imputed even treason to my motives. In a contest like this, involving as it does, the existence of the Government, and the preservation of popular freedom; arousing as it does, the fiercest passions of rival and contending parties, a man must be at once for or against his whole country. It matters not under what banner he arrays himself, those upon the opposite side will attach to him the most selfish and treasonable aims. I say, therefore, in advance, that in whatever I may now say upon the subject under consideration, I shall not seek to evade any responsibilities of that kind. I shall not attempt to speak merely to avoid censure, or by affectation or hypocrisy to court commendation. In what I say, I shall be bound by a strict regard for truth. The opinions I shall avow are those sanctioned by observation and experience; they have the approval of my heart. And the facts to which I shall refer, will, I am sure, be sustained by the unquestioned truths of history.

Sir, if I had a jury of twelve honest and unpretending men, sworn well and truly to try the issues joined between the contending factions—a jury belonging to no political party, and without other motive than a desire to subserve the best interests of their country—I could, by submitting a plain statement of undisputed facts, have a prompt and unanimous verdict in favor of preserving the Union of these States. Unfortunately, sir, we cannot here, and now, get a disinterested jury; but it is consoling to know that time will soon adjourn all these difficult questions to the arbitrament of all the people, who, with no other weapon than the ballot-box, will be able to arrest revolution and save the country. If, for the last year or two, the men and women of this country could have observed the deliberations of this body; could have seen each member as he is, and witnessed your daily proceedings, they would instantly rise up all over the country, and arrest the tide of revolution, which is threatening to involve us all in one common ruin. There are thirty millions of

people whose peace and happiness, whose very existence is involved in these grave issues. This House is composed of but two hundred and thirty-six members, some of whom, doubtless, have reached their present position by the merest accidents. It may be safely assumed that each member of this body represents, among his immediate constituents, more than that number of statesmen—statesmen, perhaps, our superiors in wisdom and moderation, yet we are to be told in this day of fearful precipitation, that because forsooth, *Congress*, elected as it has been, without reference to the issues now before us, cannot, or will not, instantly do something to stay the tide of revolution, therefore, there is no hope for the country. I say, again, could the people behold those who are now around me, could they see them when under their alternate hopes and fears—the hopes inspired by the “*Tribune*,” or the fears aroused by the thunderings of the “*Herald*,”—[Laughter.] could they see and know all these things, as they really are, their good sense would cause them to reject with scorn, the idea of hazarding, finally and forever, the peace of the country alone upon the deliberations of such a body? Can it be possible that we hold the final destinies of such a people, and such a country in our hands alone? I answer, no; such an imputation is a libel upon the good sense of the millions who are resolved to preserve the institutions our ancestors so wisely ordained. As well might so many hackmen, gathered promiscuously from the streets of New York, get together and constitute themselves sole arbiters of a country, which will endure so long as we are fit to be free. In what spirit was our Government conceived? It was in jealousy, and not in confidence. Why, sir, by the very Constitution which you and I have sworn to support—and I mean to keep my oath—your Government alone was formed; and throughout every line of that Constitution, is a manifest distrust of man’s ability to resist the temptations of power. Hence, short terms in office were prescribed, and every officer of the Government was required to swear fealty to that Constitution. Even the Father of his Country was not allowed to assume the Executive authority, until he had first invoked the vengeance of Heaven, should he fail faithfully to support and defend the Constitution he had assisted to ordain. This body is wisely so constituted that, at the expiration of every two years,

we are compelled by the Constitution, to return our authority to the people. If dissatisfied with our conduct they are sure to dispense with our services. Our Government contemplated just such emergencies as we are now compelled to meet, and, however, contumacious the politicians may be, in despite of them, every issue now before us will soon be adjourned by the Constitution itself to the decision of the whole people. They have the good sense and patriotism to work out a safe solution of all real or pretended difficulties. If error prevails now, their sound judgment will combat it successfully, and all will finally be well again.

Mr. Speaker, although we are to-day deliberating upon questions which, when we were respectively elected, were not before the American people, yet the hasty precipitators of this revolution, tell us, if we do not decide at once, and so deciding come up to their requirements, we must accept the alternative of dismemberment with all its attendant horrors! I protest against it. I demand, to-day, for the innocent millions whose peace, prosperity, civilization—whose very existence is so fearfully involved, an adjournment of this whole matter from the arbitrament of maddened unrelenting politicians to all the people—to those whose servants we are, and who will not fail in this great emergency, to save the priceless heritage which you have no rightful power to destroy. And, sir, if you do not so adjourn all these questions to the people—to those whose peace and happiness are so fearfully imperilled—they will speedily adjourn you to a dark oblivion, and write shame and infamy upon your graves. What right have you or I, or any one of us, to assume that we alone will pass, finally, upon the questions of peace and war, among our own people, when they themselves, with the ballot-box in their hands, are impatient, as I believe, to pass their judgment upon these measures, which, however, abstract they may be, will, if adopted, disarm the enemies of the Union of their treasonable prettexts, and leave them without further power to mislead their too confiding victims. I yet trust this House will do something—yes, sir, do much, to allay this alarm, and apprehension; and while I shall continue to vote for every proposition to disarm those *whose aim is disunion*, and whose grievances are mainly prettexts, I do not hesitate to announce in my place, that if this Congress shall, finally, fail to meet the public expectation in patriotic quarters, I will not then be willing to abandon my interest in almost the only government in the world, which is worth preserving. This House cannot, by any indifference it may manifest to the various propositions before

it, force me to join those, who, aiming at disunion as an end, expect by your indifference to gather strength for their revolutionary designs. Before I consent to aid in the overthrow of my country, and to extinguish its nationality, I will counsel with your masters—the people—those in whose unambitious hearts, love of country and of kind, burns as brightly as of yore.

Sir, this revolution which threatens, speedily to involve us all, and which is suggestive of so terrible a future, is the most extraordinary, unpardonable, and indefensible the world has ever looked upon; and public men all over the country, of whom better things were expected—men who, a few months ago, were indignant at the bare suspicion of their sympathy or complicity with those who were *then* plotting revolution, are now counselling armed rebellion, and playing with the worst passions of mankind, as though nothing serious were involved in the result.

I propose to meet fairly the dread alternative presented by these precipitators; to meet them in a candid spirit, and to array in opposition to their real and pretended grievances, some of the manifold blessings which all sections of the country have derived from the Government—a Government which smiles even yet benignantly upon its misguided children. And may I not ask, what utter madness and folly, must there be in subverting the Government for the purpose of securing *out of the Union*, rights or privileges which may not be secured or vindicated by candid appeals to our kindred and friends, who salute the same flag, and acknowledge a common ancestry.

It is a remarkable and most significant fact, that this revolution is not justified or carried on with reference so much to anything which *has* been done by Congress, or any political party, as because of dangers which, it is alleged, are to be apprehended *in the future*. The only thing charged to have been already done or performed, as was said by my friend from Virginia, [Mr. MILLSON] two days ago, is the passage by the Legislatures of some of the free States, of the so-called Personal Liberty bills. If I had time—I have not—I believe precipitation reigns here, and each moment, as it “rides upon the dial’s point,” (pointing to the clock,) admonishes me that I, too, must be precipitate. If I had time, I could show—and I challenge contradiction from any disunionist, if such there be here—that you will be infinitely more the victims of the unfriendly legislation of the free States, when the Government has been destroyed, than you now are, or ever can be, while the Constitution endures and the Union is maintained. This—the passage of the Personal Liberty bills—I repeat, is the only thing now actually done or performed

by any department of Government, State or Federal, of which even disunionists can complain. I will endeavor, then, to state the dangers you profess to fear in the future.

First, You say the people of the North are opposed to the execution of the fugitive slave law.

Second, That the Republican party, when they obtain control of both branches of Congress, intend to exclude slavery from all the Territories by act of Congress.

Third, That the people of the North refuse to grant Congressional protection to slave property in the free Territories.

Fourth, That they intend, finally, to change the Federal Constitution, thereby to enable them to abolish slavery in the States.

Fifth, That the people of the free States are opposed to slavery.

Sixth, That the people of the respective sections are not homogeneous—that they hate each other.

Seventh, That some of the people of the free States, favor the social and political equality of the negro.

Eighth, That the South is in danger of invasions, similar to John Brown's raid into Virginia.

I think I have fairly stated all the various charges which the disunionists have embodied into this indictment against the Government they seek to overthrow, and the people they would treat as enemies. Now, sir, I frankly confess that the Personal Liberty bills do exist in some of the free States. They are, whenever designed to evade the Constitution or the laws passed under it, without extenuation or excuse. But it is gratifying to perceive, if the signs of the times are worth anything, that all these Personal Liberty bills, which in any manner conflict with the Constitution, are soon to be swept from the statute books of the free States. And if this were not so, it should not be forgotten, that these laws have existed during the whole of the last eight years of Democratic rule, and without so much as a threat of revolution for such a cause; nor should it be overlooked, that if they are *unconstitutional* they are simply void, and if they are passed without a violation of the Constitution, as States-rights men you have less reason to complain. I repeat they will soon be repealed. Nothing retards it now, in my opinion, but that general repugnance which all men feel in doing anything seemingly, "upon compulsion." I repeat, this is the only act that has been done, by State or Federal authority, upon which disunion is justified by its advocates; and, as I before said, the other grounds of complaint are in reference to things you profess to believe will *hereafter* occur—things which never have happened, and which never could transpire

if the seceding States had continued in the Union, and your representatives had remained at their posts. I might further remark in regard to these Personal Liberty bills, that they do not, as I am assured, exist in the border free States—the States which immediately adjoin the slave States—Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Where, then, do they exist? They are found on the statute books only, of such far off States as Vermont—a State in which, I am assured, there has not been a fugitive slave for forty years; a State as inaccessible to a slave's approach, as his escape is impossible from South Carolina.

But you say that slaves escape from the southern States, and are permitted to pass *through* the free States, and take refuge in Canada. I grant this to be true; and they will, in all time to come, occasionally escape from their owners. No system of laws can guard against it. In some negroes a disposition to run away is inherent. It must be endured, unless, per chance, you can invent some peculiar lineament to restrain the elasticity of their legs. (Laughter.) I reside within a day's ride of the free States, yet I have never known more than one slave to make his escape from my own neighborhood into the free States. He passed through that part of Kentucky now represented by my friend, [Mr. BURNETT.] and took refuge in Illinois. He was arrested by some of the citizens of that State and taken back to his owner. Now, I will not blame my friend from Kentucky for permitting this fugitive to pass *through* his district, nor will I counsel disunion because his constituents did not arrest him on his way. Fugitive slaves do pass through the free States, and find freedom in Canada, but have you any means of reclaiming them now, in the British dominions; and will not a disruption of the Union, in effect, bring the Canada line down to the banks of the Ohio?

But what appeals have the southern States made to the free States to repeal these statutes? Is not their existence rather an imaginary than a real grievance? For I am informed that under them no fugitive slave has ever been liberated, nor has there been, at any time, a prosecution or fine, forfeiture or conviction, for any alleged violation of their provisions. Instead of seeking relief in that spirit which would have given dignity and effect to the appeal, the whole matter has been left to the party newspapers and politicians.

But the precipitators complain, as I have stated, that many of the people of the free States are hostile to the execution of the fugitive-slave law. Doubtless this is so to a great extent; but this is not the fault of the Federal Government, nor of the law. Mr.

Buchanan, in his late annual message to Congress, used this very language:

"The fugitive-slave law has been carried into execution in every contested case since the commencement of the present administration."

And it is a matter of history, that not a dozen slaves have been rescued within the last forty years, from the custody of the officers of the United States, while acting under the authority of that law. You know the statement I make is true, although the people of the South are made to believe that it is impossible to recapture a runaway slave without his being in almost every instance rescued from the custody of the officers of the law. And while every rescue is made a matter of public notoriety, mention in rarely, if ever made, of the instances in which the law is enforced. We all know that fugitive slaves are almost constantly being captured in the free States and carried back to their owners; but information of cases of this kind rarely find their way into the party newspapers—certainly not in those which advocate disunion. But a mob or a riot, originating in matters of this kind, is the food upon which secession leaders wax wroth and grow fat. If the fugitive-slave law is not *now* well executed, will it be more faithfully enforced if you dissolve the Union? Will you then have any fugitive-slave law whatever? It cannot exist for a moment beyond the life of that Constitution which secession seeks to destroy.

Whether we have two or more Confederacies, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Maryland are to be converted into mere outposts. The people who know most of their present free-State neighbors, and with whom commercial intercourse must of necessity exist, are to have their immediate northern friends transformed into enemies, and all the privileges of the Constitution are to be surrendered for the poor boon of standing as military sentinels to guard those who dream of Southern Confederacies, and feel secure because of their remoteness from danger. These seceding States are now no sufferers from the evils of which they complain. They know nothing of Personal Liberty bills, except as they afford pretexts for their schemes, while hundreds of miles of slave territory intervenes between them and the free States. It is the border slave States I have named which alone feel the injustice of the abolitionists; and now the Gulf States propose by disunion, to aggravate all these evils and add to their number a thousand fold. It remains to be seen if they and their misguided allies can so far mislead the people of the border slave States as to induce them thus recklessly to throw away their best interests, to gratify the malignity of disappointed ambition. And let it be remembered that

there is no complaint from any quarter of the South against the provisions of the fugitive-slave law. The charge, as I have already said, is that some of the people of the free States do not approve its provisions, and sometimes resist its enforcement. But this is not the fault of the Federal Government, which disunion would madly destroy. Mr. Orr, late the presiding officer of this House, and very recently a resident Commissioner "near the Government of the United States," from the Kingdom of South Carolina, (laughter) has declared the fugitive-slave law to be "as stringent as human ingenuity can make it." I ask my friends who are in favor of dissolving the Union, if its overthrow will make the fugitive-slave law more stringent, or make the radical anti-slavery men of the free States more inclined to admire its provisions. I frankly admit that the northern people are opposed to slavery in the abstract; they always were; they are so now, and they always will be so. You cannot find an honest northern man, born, reared, and educated in a free State—and who knows nothing of the stern necessity of the relation of servitude as it exists in the southern States, but what he hears from Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and their coadjutors—who is not opposed to slavery in the abstract. It is true many of your Yankees go South, and almost instantly fall in love with a negro (laughter)—I beg pardon—with a woman who has some real or contingent interest in a plantation and negroes; and not unfrequently they cajole her into marriage. Very soon you will hear them announce their belief in the theory of Agassiz, and descant hugely against the unity of the human race. I have had repeated lectures myself from these interesting gentry. I repeat that the people of the free States have always been opposed to slavery—as evidence of which I point you to the fact that they abolished it when it existed among them. It is quite as difficult to make a northern man favorable to negro slavery—without making him interested in it—as it is to make a politician run away from a fat office. (Laughter.)

The precipitators assign as another cause for their attempt to overthrow the Government, that the people of the free States intend to abolish slavery in the States where it exists. Now, sir, I do not believe there is one word of truth in this allegation, and those who make it ought to know better; and if such were their desire we all know they have no such power. The whole Republican party denounce this charge as false. I am here in the presence of the members of this House, and I aver that there is not a man in this Congress, of any party, from any quarter of the country, who claims

the power or avows the purpose to interfere with slavery in the States where it exists. (Cries of "not one," from the Republican side of the House.) If there is one I wish to know it, (voice, "There are none.") because he will receive the rebuke not only of his colleagues, but of every man who wishes to live up to the Constitution. But, sir, this purpose is imputed to the people of the free States by the disunionists and their allies, in the teeth of the most solemn assurance which a political party can make to the world; and I hesitate not to say that this assurance has been, in many instances, purposely withheld from the people of the slave States so that this misrepresentation might produce its baleful effects upon the popular mind. I remember that during the last summer some of the newspapers in my own State affected to be horrified because I read the following resolution from the Republican platform:

"That the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the States, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions, according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depends; and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter under what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes."

And I do not hesitate now, in this presence, to assert, that no political party that ever assembled in convention in this country, has given stronger guaranties against any desire or any power to interfere with slavery in the States of this Union. They did more than this—that which no other political party in this country has ever done. Apprehending the possibility of invasions similar to that of John Brown, they denounce in express terms all such raids "as among the gravest of crimes." Common fairness requires that we take gentlemen at their word, but if mere were wanting in this regard, they are now willing to appease your apprehensions—if any such you have—to vote for an amendment to the Constitution, declaring in express terms that Congress shall never have power or authority to legislate in regard to slavery in the States where it may exist. Such a provision would be, in fact, no amendment at all, but a declaration of what the Constitution already is; for no intelligent lawyer, no man of sense, believes that the Constitution now confers upon Congress any such power.

But, say those who are intent upon subverting the Government: the people of the two sections are dissimilar; they have their peculiarities and prejudices; they hate each other. Sir, that may all be true to some extent, but there may be more hope of another, and, I trust, a better generation.

How long have they been hating each other to that extent which can justify a separation, and that intensified hate which

will be sure to follow fraternal war? The people of the North and South do not hate each other, one particle more than did the embittered leaders of the old Whig and Democratic parties at the close of those sanguinary political conflicts which marked our history a few brief years ago. But will they love each other any more sincerely when they are separated into hostile armies and encamped in battle array? Or, will the bloody traditions, which will disturb the repose of our children, prepare them for a more cordial embrace? True, you may separate upon paper, but the Ohio will be a poor memorial of peace between a rival people and contending States. But I will not agree that you hate each other now. Our lineage is the same, and each should know the other's infirmities by his own. If your constituents could sometimes see, how frequently and how lovingly the Free Soiler and the Southern Radical hold kind and familiar council; how often they almost embrace each other, they would not for a moment believe the stale complaint of sectional hate. I will tell you when you most cordially hate each other. 'Tis when the *ins* are compelled to give place to the *outs*. When that army of political retainers, by the reverses of political fortune, has to take up its baggage, and abandon the tempting harvests of the Capital, then it is you hate each other. (Laughter and applause in the galleries.) Sir, if you desire to witness a grand living panorama of the sorrowful faces which were seen when the Jews were led into captivity, you have but to take a position upon one of these adjacent towers on the fourth of March, and behold these martyrs, now so devoted to country, when they are exiled from the places they now know, and love so well. Sir, I trust that in a grave public emergency like this, love of our whole country, and every part of it, may banish all meaner emotions. In an hour like this, I would scorn to cherish an unkind political feeling toward a human being. I feel that if I could, by immolating myself, add a day to the life of my country, I would freely make the offering; and I trust that all others will yet be found to yield much to preserve that Union with which is mingled the best hopes of mankind. Again I ask you; will you love each other better in that fearful hour of final separation? You will not! You cannot! But hate—undying hate—will foment and protract feuds and contests more bitter and unrelenting, than those of the rival houses of York and Lancaster. Furthermore: let this government be broken up, and the Border Slave States dragged, first into revolution and then into a Southern Confederacy, and ten years will not have elapsed before the slumbering fires of the present strife will be bla-

zing *there*, and perhaps *another revolution* will mark our history. If this be not so, then all history is a falsehood, and its philosophy a lie.

It is alleged that a portion of the people of the free States favor the social equality of the negro. Well, if this be so to any considerable extent, I am very sorry for it and wish it were otherwise. To say the least, it exhibits, in my judgment, a very bad taste; but I do not believe it is so to any considerable extent. But if it were, would separation change their tastes or make them repudiate such social equality. I will not make any special allusion, or recur particularly to a chapter in our past party warfare. Were I to do so, I might show how an alleged predilection for the social equality of the negro was once charged upon a gallant soldier and veteran statesman, who, during an eventful life, was a special favorite of the people, North and South. But this I will say, that scandal is the poisonous weapon of all political parties in truly exciting times. It is often invoked, and but rarely in vain. I may say that the political equality of the negro was not wholly unknown to the people of some of the slave States thirty years ago. Half a century elapsed, in some of the southern States, before the right of suffrage was denied to the free negro population. I live in a State whose public men have not been wholly unknown to fame. We yet preserve recollections of a Jackson and a Polk. The first constitution of Tennessee was made in 1796. It remained unchanged until the year of grace 1835, and one of the peculiar features of that constitution was that it sanctioned and approved the political equality of the negro to the extent of allowing the right of suffrage; and if he owned a sufficient amount of property, he was given a preference over the white man who had none. Andrew Jackson was a member of the convention that ordained that constitution.—His signature is attached to it to-day, and twice, before it was changed, he was made President of the United States. In the State of New York, but two months ago, a proposition to give political equality to the negro, to the extent of universal suffrage, was voted down by more than ten to one. It did not receive the vote of any considerable minority in a single county in the State. I repeat, that the political equality of the negro, to the extent I have named—and it is, I believe, the extent to which it prevails in any of the free States—has existed heretofore in many of the southern States. It formerly prevailed in my native State—North Carolina—where, until within the last thirty years, free negroes were allowed the right of suffrage. May we not exercise

a little charity and forbearance upon this matter, especially as we set the example and have no rightful power, to prevent its exercise in other States. Most of the free States never have, and do not now permit negro suffrage, while social equality is a thing almost wholly unknown, even in the most radical of the anti-slavery States. The people of Tennessee advanced somewhat slowly, as is shown by their allowing negro suffrage from 1796 until 1835, and as these Republicans are somewhat progressive, perhaps they, too, after a while, may change their policy.

As to the apprehensions expressed about invasions, such as John Brown made into Virginia, I have this to answer: will disunion or separation enable the seceding States to protect themselves more efficiently than now? Can you have a more sanguinary code for the punishment of such invasions *after* separation than we now have? At this time, every citizen of the southern States feels himself judge, juror, and executioner in such cases, and every tree in the forest is made a convenient gallows on which to hang such invaders. John Brown's fate has taught all such men that we now have a code in such cases as sure and summary as it can be made. It is a matter of history that the noble State of Pennsylvania—a State which, if it had to speak through the ballot-box to-day, would roll up a majority of thousands in favor of Union and a fair adjustment of present complications—was prompt to vindicate herself from any suspicion of sympathy with Brown and his dozen followers. Two of his adherents sought refuge in the mountains of that State, where they were arrested by as many of her citizens, and instantly surrendered to the authorities of Virginia, where they were tried, convicted, and executed. They paid the penalty of their crimes with a forfeiture of their lives yet so great was the panic created by this insane project of Brown that the State of Virginia immediately flew to arms her northern border was bristling with bayonets, as was alleged, to repel an apprehended invasion from Pennsylvania, and other States, for the liberation of Brown and his followers. And the people of Virginia believed such an invasion was seriously contemplated!

Sir, the great evil of the times is, that the people of all the different sections have listened so much to persistent misrepresentations, that they actually know less of each other's true purposes and feelings to-day than they did thirty years ago. The policy of the radical abolitionists is to intensify the opposition to slavery which has always existed in the northern mind. To do this, they publish every libel that fanaticism can invent, and apply it to the great body of the people

of the South. And the purpose of the disunionists of the South has been, and now is, to give notoriety to every extreme opinion of northern ultraists as the prevailing sentiment of the great body of the people of the free States. In each section, the most intemperate expressions and conduct of the other are represented as the rule instead of the exception. Thus misrepresentation, perversion, and falsehood have done their work, and we are now reaping the bitter fruits. Last year Texas was represented as in flames; peaceful villages and habitations were said to be consumed by the torch of northern abolition incendiaries. The public mind was frenzied; and no doubt the innocent were often made victims to that wide spread alarm which time and reflection will prove to have been unfounded. But, were these exaggerations all stern realities, would separation or disunion increase the power of the people there to protect themselves from the dagger or the torch? Will that State have greater facilities for punishing inciters of insurrection when *out* of the Union, than are now found *within* it? Reason and common sense answer, No. A northern abolitionist, or other person, who goes to Texas to tamper with slaves or promote rebellion, deserves a permanent lodgment in an asylum for the insane. Of all the places in the world, Texas is the last to welcome or appreciate his presence. As well might the most devoutly pious seek happiness by folding his Christian mantle around him, and plunging into the gulf which separates Lazarus from the rich man in hell. [Laughter.] So much then, for the various allegations which the seceders have preferred against the Federal Government.

I have for the sake of the argument accepted all your charges as true, and allowed you to present them in their most aggravated form; and were they all really true to the extent, that partisan coloring has painted them, still so well satisfied am I that disunion would aggravate them all and prove no remedy for anything, that I would endure all these evils for years to come, before I would overthrow my country, and entail upon its kindred people the inevitable horrors of fraternal war. Sir, I go further; I so love my country that I would add to all these things, a continuance of the unfortunate reign of James Buchanan, and his late advisers, for eight years more. I would repeat the sad experiment of the "old Public Functionary" for a dozen years, before I would consent to murder my country and extinguish the patriot's last and dearest hopes.

In regard to the pending question and others of a kindred nature, I have only time to say, that I am ready to vote for the proposition originally submitted to the Senate, and commonly called the Crittenden amend-

ment. I will vote, of course, for the proposition which I had the honor to submit to the House a few days ago; and, failing in this, I will support in good faith the measures reported by the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. Corwin] from the committee of thirty-three. I will support any one of these, preferring of course my own. And should each, and all of these measures fail; should all other pending propositions be voted down, I will not then abandon the Union of these States, and the untold blessings it lavishes upon the votaries of civil liberty throughout the world. Failing in each and all of these measures, I will return home, and link my destinies with those who are ready to confront disunion. If needs be, I will meet it with a torch in one hand and a sword in the other, and so help me God, so long as the stars and stripes wave o'er my State, or any part of it, I will never bow the knee to the storm of Disunion. [Great applause in the galleries.]

Mr. Speaker: Let us look impartially for a moment, at some of the leading political events of the past. They will justify the assertion that, from the time the Constitution was ordained, down to this hour, no act has been passed by Congress, in regard to slavery anywhere, in the States or Territories, which was not dictated or controlled by the statesmen of the South, demanded by the public opinion of the South, or which has not received the sanction and approval of the leading statesmen of that section of country. The whole policy of the Federal Government in regard to the government of the Territories, and the slavery question in all its bearings, is just such as Mr. Lincoln, will be compelled by the Constitution and his oath of office, to enforce. More sir: It is the policy, which has been initiated and carried into effect by the Democratic or dominant party of the South. It has been forced upon the country by them, and has, heretofore, met their cordial approval. If I had time, I could demonstrate this by proof. And just here Mr. Speaker,—as I will not be able to say all I wish to say, within the hour allowed by the rules of the House, unless by unanimous consent,—I will pledge myself, if the House will grant me an extension of time, not to trouble it again, with any extended remarks, during the remaining few days of the session. Intending to impose upon myself a voluntary retirement from public life, at the close of the present Congress, I hope I may have the permission of the House, to be unrestricted as to time. (Cries of "go on," "we will extend your time.")

Mr. Speaker: When the Declaration of Independence was proclaimed; when the Constitution was ratified, our Western boundary was the Mississippi river. From that

day to this, at the instance of Southern statesmen, the area of this country has been vastly enlarged. At the period of Independence, slavery may be said to have existed in all the States and Territories. Before this time, slavery had been sanctioned by law, throughout the British possessions of North America, and, of course, it remained after the war of the Revolution. Since that period, as I have already said, Southern policy has controlled the question of territorial aggrandizement. Whatever territory the men of the South have asked Congress to acquire, the same has been acquired; whatever policy her representatives have advocated, whether financial or commercial, has generally prevailed; and in all these protracted struggles, growing out of the slavery question, the just and reasonable demands and guarantees, required by us, have been given. Perhaps, in some cases, men of extreme views have not been gratified, but every protracted struggle has resulted, in what has been regarded as Southern triumphs, or acquiesced in as fair legislative enactments. And this has occurred when the Northern States had a large representative majority. These facts should certainly be considered by those who are told that the Federal Government is a curse, and disunion a blessing.

The purchase of the Louisiana territory—a slave-holding country—was made at the instance of the people of the South. Three slave and two free States have already been formed within its limits. Its area was great. It now has vast resources, and in a few brief years it will have the wealth and population of a mighty empire. Fifty years hence it will be more powerful in all that constitutes a State than was France when Napoleon, flushed with victory, first looked upon the “sun of Austerlitz.” It was acquired, I repeat, by the negotiations of a southern President—Northern Representatives generously voting with those of the South to advise the treaty and to contribute the purchase money. Subsequently—in 1819—we purchased Florida, in which slavery then and now exists. I mention Florida with somewhat of sorrow, I will not say with shame. But a few years ago the statesmen of this country were clamorous that Florida should be purchased by the Federal Government. For what purpose? Because, said they: that peninsula belongs to a Foreign Power. It is part and parcel of this continent; it is geographically a part of the United States; it commands the entrance to the Gulf of Mexico, and its hostile eye frowns upon our increasing commerce—it *must* be ours. And, sir, it was purchased—purchased at a cost of five millions of dollars. We have expended nearly fifty millions in subduing and removing the

savages. Millions more have been expended in erecting beacons and fortifications along her reefs, to protect the commerce of the whole country. Yet, after all these large expenditures, Florida, with but little over half the number of the voting population of the district I represent, *secedes*—goes out of the Union—carrying with her, not only our public lands, but the forts, arsenals, and fortifications which were placed there by this Government for the benefit of the whole Union. And worse still: she breaks the unity of our Government, and destroys the prestige which has attended her glorious career. I can better pardon South Carolina, for she was one of the glorious “Old Thirteen;” but little Florida—which to-day has barely population sufficient to protect herself from the alligators within her borders—is wholly without apology. Florida, like Louisiana, was purchased by the aid of northern Representatives, and paid for by the money of all our people; yet, without a single grievance, she is to destroy the Union of the States, to which she owes her very existence.

Gentlemen will pardon me if I speak plainly, for I feel that I plead the cause of my whole country. Indeed, I would deserve to forfeit the good opinion of the people who sent me here, were I to attempt to avoid the responsibilities of the hour. They will be best met by dealing with them in a frank and candid spirit.

I begin next with the acquisition of Texas, another slaveholding region. We admitted her into the then happy family of States and welcomed her people to our embrace when they sought the protection of our national flag. And this reminds us of her early trials and recalls the vicissitudes of her heroic chieftain. I allude of course to General Houston, whose old age is now devoted to the preservation of the Federal Union. His life, though protracted through two generations, has been historic at every step: but its sublimest hour is now. History tells of reluctant exiles, who returned to their native land, with the avenging torch and sword, but history furnishes but one Houston. His exile was voluntary. He abandoned fame and honors, when tendered by his State; he returned tottering with the weight of years, and the load of empire he laid down at your feet. In his exile he still loved the flag of his native land. Distance and banishment had impressed him with a truer sense of its protecting power, and he clings to it still. The taunt of “submissionist” and “hoary-headed traitor” have not, I trust it never will, cause him to abandon it to its foes.

The annexation of Texas led, finally, to a war with Mexico—a war against which,

as you know, many of the people of the North protested. This is abundantly proved by reference to the political history of that day. The people of the South, generally, demanded that this should be the occasion of annexing a large part of Mexico, and it was done. The ratification of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, extended your area to the Pacific ocean. Thus had the old thirteen States expanded, until now we stretch from the torrid zone of the South to the frozen regions of the North, while on the East and West we are met by the returning waves of the two great oceans of the world. This is the country which party madness would suspend upon the passions of the hour. Behold it, with all its vast resources, its rivers and lakes, its mountains, and mineral wealth. Though in its infancy, it is greater in all the elements of enduring power, and more advanced in a high civilization, than was the Roman empire, when her Imperial eagles were hovering around the pillar of Hercules. The hand of disunion *must* be stayed. *Our country must not perish*, while its monuments are yet unfinished and the soldiers of the Revolution survive.

Again: In 1793 the South demanded the passage of a law by Congress for the return of fugitive slaves. It was promptly passed. In 1850 you complained of its inefficiency and demanded a more stringent one—it was granted—it has been faithfully enforced by the Federal Government. Even disunionists admit this to be so. What more? In 1820, a majority of Representatives from the Southern States, voted for the Missouri Compromise. In the Senate, among Southern Senators, the vote was ten to one in its favor. So unmistakably satisfactory was it at the time, that Mr. Pinckney, of South Carolina—then so eminent and distinguished—declared that it was regarded as “a great Southern triumph.” The public men of the South, who secured the adoption of that compromise, were, until recently, proclaimed “public benefactors.”

In 1854 the same men, who are now clamorous for disunion, demanded the repeal of that compromise, and it was accomplished by the aid of Northern votes. You repealed it,—time honored as it was—and inaugurated the new doctrine of Popular Sovereignty, or non-interference on the part of Congress, which doctrine is in full force to-day, in all the organized Territories. That principle was embodied in laws, enacted by the Representatives from the South, and which, repeatedly since 1850, has been ratified at the polls; and the whole Democratic party of the country have solemnly pledged themselves, to stand by it, as a *final settlement*. The Kansas-Nebraska bill was the pet measure of those who now compose the

main army of the seceders—demanded by the Democratic party of the South, and unfortunately for the country, yielded by their allies at the North.

True, in 1850 you demanded that the Missouri compromise line, with additional guarantees, should be extended to the Pacific ocean, and I frankly confess, it was refused by the North; but you secured the compromise measures of 1850 which most of the public men of the South, declared were better “in substance and principle,” than the measures which had been refused. These compromise measures of 1850, were ratified with singular unanimity by all those North and South, who in 1852 voted for Mr. Pierce and General Scott for the Presidency. Indeed the two great political parties of that day pledged themselves to abide by these measures, as an honorable and fair adjustment of the whole subject of slavery in the Territories. And all these measures are yet untouched, and in full force to-day. I ask again, then, what principle or policy—what public measure—have the people of the South ever urged upon the Federal Government, which has been denied? I answer none. It is true that the politicians, during the last year, demanded that the Federal Government, which as a rule, has never legislated for or against slavery—which is neither pro-slavery nor anti-slavery, which has abolished slavery in some Territories, and protected it in others—should reverse its former policy, and that slavery should be protected by Congress upon every square inch of the organized Territories of the United States, without any regard whatever to the will of the people of the Territories, although they might have abolished it by legislative enactment. This demand, which no reasonable man could have expected to be yielded, was rejected by a majority of millions. The issue was made in the last Presidential election, in the most pointed manner. The result was precisely what its advocates and opponents alike desired and expected. In that contest nearly two millions of men voted for Mr. Lincoln; nearly two millions for Mr. Douglas, and about three quarters of a million for Mr. Bell. All those who adhered to Lincoln and Douglas, and a large majority of those who sustained Mr. Bell, declared against it—against demanding this impossibility of the Federal Congress. Breckenridge only received about eight hundred thousand votes, being in a popular minority, even in the slave States; so that the advocates of congressional legislation, to protect slavery in the free Territories—including all those who voted for Breckenridge—were in a minority of more than three millions. And this worthless abstraction—so impossible to obtain *in* or *out* of the Union—is the only demand

which has been made by any respectable portion of the people of the South, which Congress has denied. I am not alone in the belief that this plank was inserted in their platform by the original seceders at Baltimore, for no other or higher purpose than to strengthen the cause of disunion in the South. In proof of this I will say: the Federal Government has been in operation nearly eighty years, and up to this hour—so far as I know—no southern member of Congress has so much as introduced a bill to provide for the protection of slavery in the free Territories of the United States. Yet southern politicians now propose to dissolve the Union, because a majority of three millions of voters have decided that non-intervention by Congress shall be its policy in regard to slavery in our original Territories, in preference to the new dogma of congressional protection. To the doctrine of non-intervention a large portion of the Republican party are willing to subscribe. But were they not willing to do so—it is well known that, if the members from the seceding States were to remain at their posts, no proposition could pass Congress, during Mr. Lincoln's administration for the abolition of slavery in the Territories, the District of Columbia, or in any place within the jurisdiction of Congress. Notwithstanding they have seceded, it cannot be done now. I undertake to say that the wisest men of the Republican party, do not desire to attempt any such thing.

It is worthy of observation, Mr. Speaker, that every argument of a disunionist may be successfully met and refuted by the complaints of another. I will submit one example, which is a fair specimen of all the rest: It is said by one that he desires to overthrow the Government for the purpose of expanding slavery; that there will be, within the next fifty years, twenty or thirty millions of slaves in the southern States, and that self-preservation requires us to anticipate this, and to secure area for the spread of the negro population, which will then be crowded into the slave region. To this another replies: that the South now has sufficient territory; many more square miles than the free States, and he desires disunion to re-open the African slave trade, to procure additional labor for the vast, unsettled regions we now have. His motto is "More Negroes from Africa." The truth is, the South needs no forced or sudden expansion. What is the true reason that you do not form and people slave States as rapidly as free States? It is not from want of territory, as you know. It proceeds from causes which no human power can avoid or control. Not only soil and climate, but population, are against you. To keep pace with the rapid strides of the free States you must first repeal that law of na-

ture, which is older than Lincoln and stronger than the Republican platform: Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth. [Laughter.] You have not the population now, nor have you—as the North has—a heavy immigration from Europe. For years you have given that immigration your encouragement, and it now pours in a broken current upon your tempting public domain.

Mr. Speaker, I shall attempt no apology for that portion of the Republican platform which declares it to be the right and duty of Congress to prohibit slavery in the Territories. I do not hesitate here, as I have done elsewhere, to pronounce this feature of their party creed to be wrong, if for no other reason, because the extension or restriction of slavery, as they well know, depends now on causes which are more controlling than any mere act of Congress. It has proved a most unwise and unnecessary feature in their political creed. It was inserted, I apprehend, for a reason similar to that which has caused a certain dominant party in the South, for years past, to make the negro issue paramount to all others—to *carry an election*. And at last our southern friends have found, to their sorrow, that this Sambo game is one that two can play at. I hope, as they have lost the stakes, they will resort to no other means than the ballot-box to regain their party power. I implore you to avoid the dire alternative of disunion; trust to that reaction in public opinion which is sure to come in every case where wrong or error exist, and reason is left free to combat it. And it is because I have faith in the sober second-thought of the people everywhere, that I propose to appeal from this Congress to them. If, sir, you have grievances, are you disposed to break up the Government rather than ask the people of the free States—your brethren and kindred—to consider them? No; let us adjourn this unhappy quarrel to the people—the real people—to whom this Government belongs. 'Tis but eighteen months until this whole dispute will be transferred by the Constitution to the whole people of the United States; but I implore you to transfer it to them now, and I apprehend those who persist in refusing so reasonable a demand, will be consigned to retirement and obscurity. I am not afraid to trust the people, and I shall be content to abide by their deliberate decision upon all these questions, when made.

I ask again, Why destroy our country, because this Congress may fail to agree upon specific legislative measures or constitutional amendments, which have been before the country but a few weeks, and upon which the people of the States, North and South, have had no means of passing a final judgment. I protest against it.

When, sir, and under what circumstances, was this House of Representatives chosen? The members from the Free States were nearly all elected in 1858. They were elected amid the excitement and indignation which pervaded all classes of people in the Free States, because the power and patronage of the Administration had been invoked—not to coerce a State, not to expel a State from the Union, but to coerce a Territory *into the Union* with a Constitution that its people abhorred. In that indignant uprising of the people, when party lines were eradicated, men who were most violent and extreme in their views were chosen by the people. They were elected, as I have said, without regard to the specific measures now before us. Other members from the Free States were elected at that time, with a special reference to the alleged extravagances, frauds, and corruptions of the present administration and its advisers. And how was it in the last Presidential election? Mr. Lincoln, it is well known, was not elected solely because of his sympathy and connection with the Republican party. All the odds and ends—all the opposition which Mr. Buchanan's unfortunate administration had aroused, was invoked to the support of the Republican candidate, to prevent the election of Mr. Douglas, who was regarded as the most formidable rival. For Mr. Lincoln, it is known, every element of opposition to the ruling powers was most earnestly and successfully invoked. The Democratic party, it was known, had great resources. Its leaders were artful and industrious, ready to resort to every stratagem for success. The idea generally prevailed that they knew how to keep open the ballot-box until they got votes enough. (Laughter.) These things were known or believed by every one, and throughout the Free States, with rare exceptions, all who felt that the overthrow of the present Democratic party was demanded by the interests of the country voted for Mr. Lincoln.

There is another reason why disunionists should have no apologists or defenders. Were Mr. Lincoln the monster they affect to regard him, it is well known—and to none better than themselves—that during his whole administration the Senate would have been politically opposed to him. The next House of Representatives, if the seceding States are represented, will be also largely opposed to the Republican party, while, the Supreme Court,—heretofore claimed as the sheet-anchor of those who are now disunionists—is composed almost entirely of the political opponents of Mr. Lincoln. With these facts before us, we behold the seceders running away from dangers which they have the power to avert, and cannot therefore truly fear. In common parlance they have “spiked their cannon, burned their gun-carriages, and retired for safety,” to Fort Disunion. (Laughter.)

There are gentlemen on the Republican side of the House who refuse to agree to what I regard as a reasonable proposition for compromise or adjustment, because—they say—it will not correspond with their former political records. Political consistency is desirable only when it accords with wisdom. There should be no hesitation between apparent personal consistency, and the preservation of the country. Great emergencies often demand a seeming sacrifice, and should that sacrifice be demanded now, I trust we shall all be found ready to offer it upon the altar of our country. I appeal, then, first to you, and should you, as Representatives, fail to meet the just expectations of reasonable men, I will appeal from you to the people—to those who are still your masters.

The people of the South, who have most at stake, will be found to counsel prudence and moderation. Wise men, conscious of that power which is inspired by being in the right, will not embrace the precipitation and madness of the times. Whatever they may desire our northern brethren to do, they will make known in a firm yet respectful and fraternal way. Whatever your politicians may do, I doubt not the *people* of the North will meet us, if time is given, and moderation prevails, in a reciprocal spirit. Interchange of opinion will lead, no doubt, to the best results, and we will yet preserve in all its glory that country still so dear for its blessings.

Mr. VALLANDIGHAM. (interrupting) I want to ask the gentleman from Tennessee a question which *may* control my vote upon the pending propositions, and I trust he will give me a candid answer.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I will.

Mr. VALLANDIGHAM. If his statement of the case between the slaveholding and the non-slaveholding States of the Union be true, *ought* the people of the free States to humiliate themselves by proposing any constitutional amendment, or any additional legislation?

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, so persistent have been the misrepresentations of the leading men in all sections of the Union—“misapprehension” is perhaps a better term—so persistent have been these misrepresentations, made even at the North, and under which our people are laboring, in regard to what the Republican policy is to be, that many of the people of the South seem almost willing—pardon the expression—“to believe a lie that they may be damned.” (Laughter.) Now, sir, I will give the gentleman a specimen.

Mr. VALLANDIGHAM. Ought the people of the free States to do anything inconsistent with their self-respect?

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I will not ask them to do anything which self-respect forbids. But it is known that a portion of the people of the

South are like a tempest—I will not call them *mad*, others have called them *insane*—I do not inquire why they are so; they ought not to be so; but we are advised, in some part of Holy Writ, that it is sometimes best to answer even a fool “according to his folly.” And if these people are excited to so fearful an extent, and if they are thus misled, is it not proper for the Republicans, for the Democrats, for all the people of the North, to say that they will not do that which we all know they do not propose to do?

I will read from a paper edited by a gentleman now spoken of for the office of Clerk of the House of Representatives for the great Southern Confederacy, which disunion proposes to form. Pending an election for delegates in one of the seceding States, he perpetrated, among other things, the following:

“TRUTH WILL SAVE THE UNION.—The plan of Lincoln and his advisers is to turn the negroes of the South loose, and compel the poor people of the South to internarry with them. With this hybrid population, they (the Yankees) expect to raise cotton for their looms—in fact to reap the harvest of the South. But the white people of the South, however poor, are opposed to amalgamating with negroes—they leave that to the white people of Massachusetts. We are of the opinion, that the attempt to force amalgamation on the non-slaveholders of the South, will be the most difficult job Mr. Lincoln ever undertook. He may give his own daughters, or his neighbors’, to buck negroes, but the sentiment is different here.”

Why, sir, is it not a matter of history that R. Barwell Rhett stood in the streets of Charleston a few weeks ago announcing to the enraged multitude that the people of the North had elected a mulatto for Vice-President. And Mr. Memminger, too, went into the interior—to Greenville, I think it was—and announced there, to the denizens of the piney hills, to gentlemen, to lawyers, to doctors, to loafers, to shortboys, to every body that stood around, that Hamibal Hamlin was a mulatto, and that the people of the North had elected an *Abolitionist* for President, and a *mulatto* for Vice-President. Now every body knows that what you or I may say upon that subject will never reach the ears of that misguided people.

Mr. VALLANDIGHAM. I desire simply to inquire whether there is anything in the Crittenden propositions, or in those known as the propositions of the border State committee, or in the report of the Committee of Thirty-three, tending to remove this singular “delusion” which the gentleman says exists in the mind of the southern people?

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I will answer that question briefly. There is: I tell the gentleman from Ohio, the true Union men of the South are standing to-day, struggling with all their power to preserve the Government; fighting, they believe, for the cause of religion, humanity, civilization, and progress; and all these things are involved in the peace of the country. And that peace may depend upon the adoption of these propositions. They are surrounded by a tempestuous despotism—everywhere confronting a panic which is made to feed it-

self. It is all devouring. Why, sir, it is well known to every gentleman who reads the newspapers, that wherever this disunion sentiment predominates, it is simply a reign of terror.

Go to the cities of South Carolina, and what do you see? Men frantic and in arms. Go to Charleston, to Tallahassee, to Montgomery, to Jackson—to any place where those conventions were assembled, and you see the military in full control of everything. These conventions deliberated three or four hours only over the fate of an Empire. Every thing that might have invoked calmness or deliberation had disappeared, and martial music and war-like demonstrations attested the fallacy of a peaceful disruption of the States.

Mr. LEAKE. Will the gentleman allow me to ask him a question.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Certainly.

Mr. LEAKE. I merely wish to know whether the gentleman is speaking on the side of the North, or the South?

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I am speaking on a side that has few representatives upon this floor. I am speaking on the side of my country. (Great applause in the galleries.)

Why, sir, as I was proceeding to say, what is the state of affairs now in all the villages and cities of the Gulf States? Sir, bold men, educated men, ambitious men, men of chivalry and daring, are heading the military forces. Men, women, and children are excited, just as the pomp and circumstance of war will excite everybody. Thousands believe honestly that Lincoln and his cohorts are coming down to apply the torch and the knife to the dwellings and the people of the South.

[Here the hammer fell.]

Mr. LOVEJOY obtained the floor.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I supposed I had the unanimous consent of the House to proceed.

The SPEAKER *pro tem.* (Mr. Dawes in the Chair.) The gentleman can proceed if there be no objection.

Mr. WINSLOW. I object.

Mr. MORRIS, of Illinois. The House has already given its consent.

Mr. MAYNARD. I understood that the consent of all sides of the House was obtained that my colleague should be allowed to proceed beyond his hour.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. No objection was made.

Mr. WINSLOW. I object.

Mr. HARRIS, of Maryland. I rise to a point of order. I addressed the Chair first when the hammer fell upon the gentleman from Tennessee, and I am entitled to the floor. I have no objection to the gentleman proceeding, if that be the wish of the House, but I desire to have the floor if I am entitled to it.

The SPEAKER *pro tem.* The Chair has assigned the floor to the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. MAYNARD. My colleague applied to the House during his remarks, and made certain pledges upon which he obtained the unanimous consent of the House to proceed with his remarks. There was not a dissenting voice. He afterwards gave way to the gentleman from Ohio under the pledge which was then made.

Mr. WINSLOW. The gentleman did not ask unanimous consent.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I ask, then, only the few minutes I think I am entitled to, and which I lost when I yielded to the gentleman from Ohio.

The SPEAKER *pro tem.* Is objection made?

Mr. WINSLOW. It is better to stop this thing in the beginning, and unless the hour rule is suspended generally, I must object.

Mr. HARRIS, of Maryland. I rise to a point of order. It is that the instant the hammer of the Speaker fell I addressed the Chair, and was entitled to be recognized.

The SPEAKER *pro tem.* The Chair understands the rule to be that when more than one gentleman rises at the same time, it is the province of the Chair to assign the floor. The Chair observing several members rising at the same moment, assigned the floor to the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. HARRIS, of Maryland. I must submit to the decision of the Chair.

Mr. WINSLOW. In order to accommodate the gentleman from Tennessee, I propose, that by unanimous consent, the hour rule be abolished during this discussion.

Mr. COX. I object.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I now insist upon the few minutes which I lost by interruptions. [Cries of "go on," "go on."]

The SPEAKER *pro tem.* Is objection made?

Mr. CRAIGE, of North Carolina. I object.

Mr. MORRIS, of Illinois. I rise to a point of order. It is this: that by unanimous consent of the House, permission was given to the gentleman from Tennessee to conclude his remarks upon an intimation that he would not occupy the floor at any other time during this session. When he made that proposition there was not a solitary objection to it in the House, and hence objection now comes too late.

The SPEAKER *pro tem.* The Chair does not understand that any such assent was yielded by the House.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I will relieve the House. I ask that I may occupy the remainder of my hour, and then I will resume my seat.

Mr. CRAIGE, of North Carolina. I have objected to it time and again.

The SPEAKER *pro tem.* The gentleman can proceed only by unanimous consent.

Mr. GROW. I would inquire if the time occupied in interruptions has been deducted from the gentleman's hour?

The SPEAKER *pro tem.* Nothing was stated by the Chair one way or the other.

Mr. GROW. The gentleman from Tennessee declined to yield for interruptions unless they were to be deducted from his time.

Mr. CRAIGE, of North Carolina. Nothing was said about the extension of his time at all.

Mr. GROW. The gentleman yielded the floor with the understanding that the time occupied by the interruptions should be deducted from his hour.

Mr. VALLANDIGHAM. When I requested the gentleman from Tennessee to yield for a question, his answer was, "I will yield, provided it does not come out of my time."

Mr. GROW. And nobody objected to that agreement.

Mr. VALLANDIGHAM. I think that whatever time was occupied in the dialogue between him and myself ought to be allowed him.

The SPEAKER *pro tem.* The Chair heard no such statement, but will allow the gentleman from Tennessee to proceed for five minutes.

Mr. ETHERIDGE. I will not, after what has just occurred, detain the House but a moment. I will conclude by saying that I shall vote for the proposition of the venerable Senator from Kentucky, [Mr. CRITTENDEN;] I shall, as I have before said, vote for the proposition submitted by myself, and if these fail, I shall sustain the measures reported by the gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. CORWIN.] Sir, I will vote for anything which will relieve the public mind from the painful apprehensions under which it now labors. If anything of this kind can pass this Congress—and I do not despair—it will do my heart good to know that the tide of revolution has been thereby stayed. But, as I have already stated, if nothing is finally done, I will go home to my people: I will throw myself in "the imminent deadly breach," and resist the storm of disunion to the last; and, sir, if the worst must come to the worst—if I am to be dragged to the fearful precipice and made the reluctant victim or the unwilling observer of my country's ruin, I now in advance wash my hands of the shame and the crime which will attach to those who would overthrow the public liberty to erect a despotism upon its ruins. Sir, where the flag of my country floats, there I will go. I will cling to it in this dark hour of its peril with that sacred trust and confidence a saint must feel in clinging to his God. [Great applause in the galleries.]



